

McCall, Brandon

From: Liz Marsden <qcdogs@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 03, 2013 7:48 PM
To: Jud Testimony
Subject: Raised Bill 6690 OPPOSED

Categories: Red Category

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to urge you to reject Raised Bill 6690. As a longtime dog owner and professional dog trainer who also owns a dog boarding facility in Connecticut, I see many problems with this bill.

The model for this law is one that animal rights groups use to raise the status of animals to personhood. The analogy that animals need court advocates just as children do would hold water if animals were legally -- well, people. However, they are not. They are considered property under the law. For advocates to be allowed to meddle into criminal and civil proceedings regarding "the welfare or custody" of animals is an infringement on custody rights of individual animal owners, farmers, even animal shelter managers, towns and non-profit organizations who find themselves with the custody of animals in civil and criminal proceedings.

Please allow me to paint several scenarios in which advocates would be allowed to become involved in cases where they have no business:

Suppose a husband and wife are divorcing and a property battle includes the family dog. Under Raised Bill 6690, an advocate could be appointed to represent the dog. The advocate would have the right to require each party to prove they can provide the "best" care of the dog. Imagine what this would entail, since it goes without saying that anyone who would sign up to be a court advocate for animals would be a fringe animal-rights advocate.

Suppose there is a dangerous dog case where a dog has attacked and bitten people. If the dog were being held in an animal shelter, the court advocate could argue for where that dog should be sent, or even whether or not the dog should be euthanized.

Suppose there is a case involving a case of cruelty and the animal involved is being held as evidence at an animal shelter or vet's

office. If the vet and the shelter agree that the animal is not well enough to be adopted, I can imagine a court advocate having the power and influence to drag out court proceedings so that the animal's life is "saved."

In fact, this law will do nothing more than complicate and drag out court proceedings, cost taxpayer money, and do nothing to stop cruelty or assist with prosecution. Its only aim is a thinly-veiled intent for animal-rights activists to gain standing and argue against euthanasia, and to dictate to shelter professionals how animals should be handled. We already have a felony animal cruelty law. A better use of resources would be to continue to train law enforcement officials in proper investigation and enforcement of laws against cruelty to animals. Thank you for your time.

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